

I know this shutdown will affect the lives of millions of Americans, especially at this holiday season. I'll do whatever I can to lessen the impact. Above all, the Republicans should come back to the table. Congress should immediately pass straightforward legislation to reopen the Government. That is the responsible thing to do. And we should be talking again with each

other about how to balance the budget in the interest of the American people.

I'll continue to fight for our American principles in this budget battle because that's the only way our children can come out the winners.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on the Budget *December 16, 1995*

Let me, first of all, welcome all of you here. I thank you for being here. I imagine some of you have stayed here in an unplanned way over the weekend.

We are determined, as Democrats, to try to work together and to try to work with the Republicans to achieve a balanced budget but in a way that is consistent with our principles.

As all of you know, yesterday the Republican congressional leaders called the negotiations off unless we would first put much bigger Medicare and Medicaid cuts on the table. I thought that was wrong and unwarranted.

Virtually all of us don't agree with the large portions of their tax package and particularly a lot of the special interest provisions of it. But we didn't ask them to abandon it just to talk and begin negotiations.

So we hope that we can get back to a constructive dialog consistent with our values, our

principles, and what's good for this country. And that's what we're going to be working on today.

We don't believe that decimating Medicare and Medicaid and undermining our investments in education and the environment, raising taxes on working families is a good prescription for America's future. And it is not necessary to balance the budget.

So we're going back to work today. We're going to keep working, trying to reach as much agreement among ourselves as possible, and then we'll keep reaching out to the Republicans in Congress in the hope of passing the right kind of balanced budget.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. at Blair House, prior to a meeting with Democratic Members of Congress.

Remarks on Vetoing Appropriations Legislation for the Departments of the Interior, Veterans Affairs, and Housing and Urban Development and an Exchange With Reporters *December 18, 1995*

The President. Good morning, everyone. The Republican Congress has shut down the Federal Government because they haven't passed a budget for this year and because they want to make the price of opening the Government up my acceptance of 7 long years of unacceptable cuts in health care, education, and the environment, in research and technology, cuts that are

not necessary to balancing the budget and will have an adverse effect on our way of life and on the strength of our economy.

It is wrong for the Congress to shut the Government down just to make a political point the week before Christmas. It is unfair to the American people and unfair to the public employees. This is a season of peace, and it should